

## Memory in Passover and *The Words of the Luminaries*: Insights for a Christian

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*The Passover holiday in the Jewish traditions is first and foremost a festival in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. Our own Christian understanding of memory derives from the words of institution during the Last Supper, when Jesus asks to break bread and drink wine to “do this in remembrance of me.” Modern research identified the Last Supper with the Passover Seder due to its narrative contexts in the Gospel and this reference. However, the data is more complex. This paper introduces a different direction by looking at what we can identify about the meaning of memory both in the time of Jesus and in rabbinic Judaism to uncover a broader understanding of liturgical memory. In doing so, the paper looks first at two key biblical passages of the Passover Seder, from Exodus 12 and Deuteronomy 26, and their reception in rabbinic discourse to gain insight into the function of memory in the Haggadah. It will outline the parts that seem to be essential when looking at how the Seder is celebrated in connection with the role of memory. Second, a brief look at the daily prayers among the Dead Sea Scrolls called The Words of the Luminaries may be helpful to widen the scope of the question away from the Passover ritual to a broader use of memory in liturgy and prayer. The engagement with these texts shows that the function of memory, understood not merely as a recollection of the past but as a performance that realizes the past in the present, is not unique to the Passover Seder and may open our Christian discourse, applying its concept to other liturgical phenomena such as prayer.*

*Keywords: Liturgy, Judaism, Christianity, Memory, Passover, Dead Sea Scrolls, Comparative Theology, Words of the Luminaries, Haggadah*

### The Role of Memory

Memory plays a vital role in both Jewish and Christian traditions. It is the evocation of God's deeds one lifts in one's mind in prayer. In petitionary psalms or psalms of praise, the person praying remembers God's deeds before uttering any petitions. In the words of institution, Jesus asks his disciples to break bread and drink wine in his memory. Nevertheless, there are voices in the theological discourse that claim that memory somehow lost its gravity within the Christian context. Throughout his works, Johann Baptist Metz emphasizes that a Christian theology needs to rediscover the role memory plays in its discourse. Metz promotes what he calls ecumenism with Judaism in a spirit of memory. In his more recent publication *Memoria Passionis*, he claims that Christians can learn from the Jewish concept of memory.<sup>1</sup> Barbara Meyer echoes Metz's critique and criticizes the lack of a culture of memory in Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Metz makes a compelling argument that has not been pursued, that is, bringing the discourse in dialogue with the Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> Johann Baptist Metz, *Memoria Passionis. Ein Provozierendes Gedächtnis in Pluralistischer Gesellschaft* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2017), 71 and following. See also, Johann Baptist Metz, “Christen Und Juden nach Auschwitz. Auch Eine Betrachtung Über Das Ende Bürgerlicher Religion,” in *Jenseits Bürgerlicher Religion. Reden über Die Zukunft des Christentums*, ed. Johann Baptist Metz (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980), 36. Metz's whole scope of work deals with the question of remembering after the Holocaust.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Meyer, “Die Wiederentdeckung Der Anamnese in der Christlichen Theologie. Von Der Erinnerung Des Eigenen Und Des Anderen Leid,” in *Abgrund Der Erinnerung. Kulturelle Identität Zwischen Gedächtnis Und Gegen-Gedächtnis*, ed. Jens Mattern and Günther Oesterle (Berlin: Vorwerk, 2010), 99.

concept of memory. Implied here is the notion to broaden the application of memory away from centered only on the Eucharist. I pursue a discussion on the use of memory in our Christian liturgical theology based on these claims by bringing liturgical memory into the wider context of liturgical prayer.

In a non-theological, non-academic context, people at first may think of memory as an act of recollection from the past. One would even think of “remembering something” means that it requires that one participate in the event in order to remember it. In that light, one may ask what memory means if it is not biographical memory? What role does memory play in prayers that the praying person brings to God? However, in Christian and Jewish religious rituals, remembering carries a different notion. For instance, when Christians “remember the night before Jesus died” (1 Cor 12), they do not recollect their biographical past, nor do Jews during their Passover Seder. Yet, memory has certain identifying factors that are important if one wants to understand liturgical elements such as the Eucharist or prayer. Indeed, there has been an extensive debate among scholars about the nature of the Last Supper, identifying it with the Passover Seder due to its narrative contexts in the Gospel and the reference “do this in remembrance of me.” However, the data is more complex. This paper introduces different direction. Instead of reconstructing a possible meaning of memory and how it could relate to a Jewish context at Jesus’s time that we cannot reconstruct, this paper aims at looking at what we can identify about the meaning of memory both in the time of Jesus and in rabbinic Judaism.

We can recover a fuller understanding of memory by tracing the origins and transformation of how memory was understood in the rabbinic context and move away from a Christian understanding of memory focused on the Eucharist only toward a broader liturgical-theological concept. Thus, this paper seeks to uncover an understanding of memory within the theological context of rabbinic Judaism by first sketching briefly the Christian understanding of memory, exemplified with the words of institution in 1 Cor 11. Secondly, I examine rabbinic views on memory through the example of the celebration of the Passover Seder. I believe the Passover liturgy is an excellent example to highlight the function of memory within the Jewish tradition. In a third step, I introduce *The Words of the Luminaries*, the daily prayer scrolls found in the caves near Qumran to show how this particular use of memory as we see it in the rabbinic discussion and then applied in the Passover Seder is actually a phenomenon that we find in a broader context that is not unique in the celebration of Passover—and can thus be a concept applied to a wider liturgical context..

One brief personal note: While I write this article as a Protestant Christian with a German Lutheran background, I make the humble claim that my elaborations may be of use for both Catholics and Protestants as I deal with works on both sides of the Christian “aisle.”

### **Anamnesis Discourse in Western Christianity**

Memory is part of all Christian traditions. In many ways, Christians encounter forms of memory through the recitation of psalms or in worship. In her book *Remembering the Future*, Emma O'Donnell shows how time and memory work within a Christian understanding and points out

the Christian orientation toward the future instead of the past.<sup>3</sup> Her focus lies on the role of time in connection to remembering. But there are other liturgical *loci* in which memory has its part. Most notable is the role of memory at the celebration of the Holy Communion during the Christian Sunday services. What follows here is a brief overview of the Christian foundations on memory.

During the celebration, Paul's words of institution as found in 1 Cor 11:23–26 are recited:

...on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this *in remembrance of me*." In the same way, also he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, *in remembrance of me*." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

While the theological and doctrinal interpretation of the text varies from tradition to tradition, the aspect of memory seems to have a core value in all major Christian traditions. Liturgical scholar Hans Conzelmann holds that the word "remembrance" (ἀνάμνησις) is not a mere invocation of memory but refers to a "sacramental presence,"<sup>4</sup> without further explaining its meaning. In all major traditions, it is the invocation of Christ's presence in the community sharing bread and wine that makes the sacrament sacramental.<sup>5</sup> The Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Catholic canon brings to the forefront the theological meaning of Jesus's commandment to remember him, expressing Jesus's death and resurrection during this meal.<sup>6</sup> This emphasis on Christ's passion as the object of remembrance seems to be at the heart not only of the anamnesis theology but also in the discourse on memory in general. For instance, when Metz discusses the role of memory in the Christian tradition, he claims that the Christian memory of God is at its core the memory of a passion.<sup>7</sup>

However, there is a dispute among scholars about this Christian understanding of anamnesis. Aelred Arnesen advocates for a rediscovery of the meaning of anamnesis through scripture.<sup>8</sup> He claims that we need to recover the assumptions of New Testament writers around worship. However, what are these assumptions and can we fully recover these assumptions? Arnesen does not provide any constructive idea as to what those could be. Similarly, Barbara

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<sup>3</sup> Emma O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future: The Experience of Time in Jewish and Christian Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 146, 181. O'Donnell devotes the fourth part of her book to the Christian understanding of time, focusing heavily on the understanding of time and memory in Roman Catholic thought and liturgy. Using the image of Sunday being the "eighth day" of the Eschaton, where creation and Eschaton come together, 181 and following.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 198.

<sup>5</sup> It is not so much the anamnesis that is of dispute between the traditions but rather how this presence is realized and theologically emphasized. The realization of sacramental presence varies from tradition to tradition and is point [part?] of another discussion. We are only trying to highlight that there is the idea of memory as Christ being present within the Holy Communion. Each tradition has different ways to express and believe in what way this presence is palpable.

<sup>6</sup> Enrico Mazza and Matthew J. O'Connell, *The Celebration of the Eucharist. The Origin of the Rite and the Development of Its Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 290.

<sup>7</sup> Metz, *Memoria Passionis*, 92. "Christliches Gottesgedächtnis ist im Zentrum ein Leidensgedächtnis, eine memoria passionis."

<sup>8</sup> Aelred Arnesen, "The Myth of Anamnesis," *Theology* 105, no. 828 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X0210500605>, 441.

Meyer criticizes the lack of a culture of memory in Christianity. Oriented to Johann Baptist Metz, she asks for a “more anamnestic” Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, while the Christian idea of memory is being interpreted towards the “sacramental presence” of Christ, it lacks an idea of the role of the participants and how memory is invoked in their presence. Similarly, Metz's claim seems to be focusing too narrowly on a memory of the suffering of Christ. Following Arnesen's idea to recover some of the meaning of anamnesis, the historical and social context within the time of Jesus, and the rabbinic Jewish understanding of memory can help uncover a fuller meaning of memory and provide a new, more constructive direction in the debate.

### **Commandments to Remember: The Rabbinic Discussion**

While memory plays a vital role within the Hebrew Bible, and one encounters a variety of different forms,<sup>10</sup> the most famous story that involves memory is the Exodus story. The reason for this story being so prevalent lies within a simple fact: God commanded Israel to remember it (Exod 12.13).<sup>11</sup> This emphasis on remembering God and God's commandments then becomes the foundation for the celebration of Passover. The Passover holiday exemplifies the role of memory within the Jewish tradition, especially when looking at the liturgy of the Passover and its use of the Hebrew Bible to create and develop memory. What follows is an attempt to examine the scriptures used in the liturgy of the Passover Seder, the *Passover Haggadah*, and their respective rabbinic comments to gain access to the rabbinic understanding of memory.<sup>12</sup>

The biblical narrative in the Passover Haggadah, which is a liturgical text comprised of biblical, rabbinic (liturgical) texts and hymns, focuses on two Biblical passages, Exod 13:3–8 and Deut 26:5–10, which are commandments to remember the exodus from Egypt. In the Haggadah, both texts are intertwined with rabbinic commentaries. The first, Exod 13:3–8, formulates the commandment to remember “this day” of the Exodus. The second, Deut 26:5–10, is the realized action of this commandment as it tells the story of how the Israelites came to Egypt and how they were liberated from Egypt. The Haggadah uses both passages in chapter Maggid (narratives). Maggid is situated in the first third of the Seder, between the breaking of the Middle matzah (*yachatz*) and the second handwashing (*rachatz*).

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara Meyer, “Die Wiederentdeckung der Anamnese in der christlichen Theologie: Von der Erinnerung des Eigenen und des Anderen Leid,” in *Abgrund der Erinnerung: Kulturelle Identität zwischen Gedächtnis und Gegen-Gedächtnis*, eds. Jens Mattern and Günther Oesterle (Berlin: Vorwerk, 2010), 99.

<sup>10</sup> Gen 9:16, for instance. In Exod 3:15 God announces to make a memory for himself (Exod 3:15). Yet other forms are prevalent in the psalter. Benjamin Wold gives a concise account of the variety of occurrences of memory and their role in his contribution Benjamin G. Wold, “Memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Exodus, Creation and Cosmos,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity. The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Symposium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 48-49.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2011), 91 and following.

<sup>12</sup> For further information on the Haggadah, see E. D. Goldschmidt, “Passover Haggadah,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7 (1971): 1079–1104.

Exodus 13

Exodus 13:3–8 is the prominent passage of God commanding Israel to remember the day of the Passover:

Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day, there shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. You shall tell your son on that day, “It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.”

The rabbinic sources later pick up three points of the text. First, the passage establishes the rule to eat unleavened bread for seven days. Secondly, it commands to pass on the events to later generations. Third, it further explicates the reason for celebrating, that is, that God was the one who did this for Israel and all future generations. Considering the commandment to remember in this verse, both the Midrashic Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, a commentary from the second century CE on Exodus, and later the Talmud engage in a discussion on the Passover memory being a commandment. The question the sages try to answer is how one should remember during the Seder.

Most elementary, Mishnah Pesahim 10:5 seeks to define how this Passover celebration needs to take place. Referring to the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs mentioned in Exodus, the Mishnah points out the symbolic value of these items. The Mishnah cites Rabban Gamliel, who refers to the bitter herbs as these are a reminder that Israel was redeemed in Egypt, its place of suffering. Both elements, the bitter herbs (*marror*) and the unleavened bread (*matzah*), become symbols of this experience. According to the Tanna Rabban Gamliel, Exod 13:8 implies the commandment that “in every generation, one is obligated to regard himself as though he himself had gone out from Egypt.”<sup>13</sup> Here, the Rabbi indirectly refers to the biblical verse “You shall tell your son that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’” It is the emphasis on the first-person singular (for *me*) that seems to give reason for the commandment to always remember the Exodus as if it were an event through which oneself had gone. In order to make this memory an immediate experience, Rabban Gamliel then uses the symbols of bitter herbs, matzah, and the Passover lamb, as the Mishnah states, “[t]he pesah because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt. The matzah because our fathers were redeemed from Egypt. The bitter herb because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt.”<sup>14</sup>

The experience, then, becomes a reason to praise God for the deliverance and the redemption. The commandment to tell the story is embedded in the use of *matzah* and *marror*. In the same chapter, the Haggadah refers to Gamliel’s interpretation of the elements of matzah and marror in the Mishnah. It becomes evident that, by employing the passage, the Haggadah

<sup>13</sup> M. Pesahim 10:5: בכל דור ודור תִּזְבֹּחַ אֶת עֲצֻמוֹת אֵת עֲצֻמוֹת הַיְהוּדִים הַזֵּה הוּא יְצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם

<sup>14</sup> פֶּסַח, עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁפָּסַח הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. מַצָּה, עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁנִּגְאָלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. מַרְרוֹר, עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁמָּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם

creates a meaning of the meal: eating during the Seder is a practice through which one fulfills the commandment to remember the day of the Exodus. Food plays a vital role in activating this memory. The Talmud, commenting on the Mishnah, further elaborates the role of matzah and marror by adding another quote of Rabban Gamliel. It engages in a discussion about the food elements mentioned in Exod 13, instituting the sage's authority by stating, “Anyone who did not say these three matters on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation: Passover, matzah, and bitter herbs.”<sup>15</sup>

Here, one can see that food does not play an arbitrary role within the Passover Seder. It also does not only serve as a symbol for different aspects of the Exodus. It rather becomes part of an obligation. Moreover, the food and its taste play a significant role in preserving the memory, which we can derive from the way the Talmud engages in the discussion on how one ought to eat the food. According to a Gemara in the Talmud, Rava said: “If he swallowed matzah, he fulfills his obligation; if he swallowed marror, he has not fulfilled his obligation.”<sup>16</sup> What is being said here is that it is not sufficient to only swallow the bitter herbs (*marror*) and by swallowing them avoid the unpleasant bitterness in one's mouth, but one has to taste their bitterness in order to fulfill one's obligation to remember. From this discussion, we can see that the Mishnah emphasizes the retelling of the story by engaging in a way that realizes the Exodus story through food that symbolizes aspects of the Exodus.

Another source that engages with the aspect of food is the Mekhilta. The Mekhilta considers the imperative in Exod 13:3 (“Remember this day”) as a commandment to observe Passover at the table.<sup>17</sup> It outlines four different ways to tell the story by distinguishing between four different types of children: the wise, the foolish, the wicked, and the one who does not know how to ask. The Mekhilta gives instances of how the different children should ask about the Exodus story in its retelling. It shall suffice to look at one of these explanations in the Mekhilta to show the argument. The explanation of the wicked child best suits our purposes to illustrate the point of the narrative.

The wicked child, what does it say? “What is [means] this worship to you?” Because he excluded himself from the community, you too should exclude him from the community [by] saying to him: “Because of what the Eternal did for me when I went out of Egypt.” For me, and not for you. If you had been there, you would not have been redeemed.<sup>18</sup>

Here, the Mekhilta commands the narrator to exclude the wicked child from the community of Israelites who went out of Egypt because it distinguishes between itself and the worshipping community by stating, “what is this worship to you.” This statement indicates the

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<sup>15</sup> The Talmud engages in a discussion on the symbolical meaning of the bitter herbs and the matza for the Passover. B. Berakhot 116a. רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר

שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור

<sup>16</sup> Pesahim 115b:7.

<sup>17</sup> Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, ch. 17. A note on the Mekhilta. It is interesting that the Mekhilta does not further elaborate on the marror or the matzah. However, it considers the imperative on Exod 13:3 (Remember this day”) as a commandment to observe Passover at the table. It may already imply the use of food at the celebration, but it is not explicitly stated. The use of food, however, is further elaborated in the Mishnah.

<sup>18</sup> Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Pisha 18 (ed. Lauterbach, 166–67).

child's refusal to identify with the memory by differentiating between *you* instead of referring to us. Therefore, the wicked child receives the answer that “*I* [italics are mine] went out of Egypt,” which is in stark contrast to the answer the foolish child receives (“The Eternal brought us out of Egypt.”) In both cases, the narrator reads the story as if experienced by himself. Instead of saying that “My ancestors” or “our ancestors” went out of Egypt, the narrator tells the story as if the story is the narrator's own experience. This version of the Mekhilta is what the Haggadah employs in chapter Maggid. Thus, the Haggadah itself employs this use of language.

In sum, the passage in Exod 13 contains two aspects that the rabbinic sages elaborate on, and that turns out to be vital for the role of memory in the Passover celebration. One aspect is the role of food in connection to memory. The other is the telling of the story to the children. Through food that the participants eat, they remember the history of their ancestors as if it were them. Partaking of the ritualized meal is the primary purpose of this event, and it is remarkable how it is a holistic experience in the sense that the body and all its sensual faculties are engaged in this ritual. In recent scholarship, interest in the cognitive aspects of these rituals has increased when studies focus on the psychological effects of rituals rather than merely the communal and religious effects. Luther Martin outlines recent insights on the cognitive aspects of ritual, showing that the involvement of the senses plays a significant role in creating a distinct experience separate from random experiences. He states that senses can “structure that experience in controlled ways.”<sup>19</sup> He further argues that ritual “not only establishes (virtual/sacred) places but induces in the ritual subject. . . (religious) experiences that are explicitly structured by (religious) knowledge to be located in that space.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, by participating in the ritual (and sensory) experience, the participant remembers an experience as experienced. This experience, then, allows transmitting knowledge and beliefs through this kind of “memory.”<sup>21</sup> According to these findings, senses are crucial for an experience distinct from any other and shape it as unique. The significance of the senses can be applied to the Passover Seder as it uses food not only as a symbol but as a sensory experience of Israel's last days in Egypt. By eating matzah and bitter herbs (*marror*), the experience becomes distinct. They transform that very memory into an experienced experience. This research further underlines the exhibited intentions exposed in the language surrounding the wicked child: The purpose of the celebration is to relive the experience as one's own biographical experience. Thus, Egypt did not only happen at the time of Moses, but the participants in the Passover Seder remember it as their own story with their senses; the Exodus is realized through the Seder.

### *Deuteronomy 26*

By employing the Mekhilta and the story of the four children, the Haggadah copies the representational language that makes the narrator retell the story of the Exodus as if it were the narrator's own experience. One can observe this phenomenon in many parts of the Haggadah, primarily in the chapter Magid. In Deut 26, another instance of representational language, the

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<sup>19</sup> Luther H. Martin, “Do Rituals Do? And How Do They Do It? Cognition and the Study of Ritual,” in *Introducing Religion*, ed. Willi Braun and Russel T. McCutcheon (London: Equinox, 2008), 316.

<sup>20</sup> Martin, “Cognition,” 318.

<sup>21</sup> Martin calls this kind of memory “semantic memory” based on the structure of the ritual and the knowledge of the ritual texts and analogies. See Martin, “Cognition,” 320.

Haggadah employs the first-person plural (“we/us”) when referring to the ancestors in Egypt.<sup>22</sup> To be sure, the use of the first-person plural in the Jewish liturgical context is not unusual. Like in Christian services, the language resembles the communal aspects of prayer. Yet, the community in Judaism plays a significant role as one prays even in the first-person plural when praying alone. Within its discussion on prayer, the tractate Berakhot in the Talmud elucidates that one needs to regard any prayer in its context within the community. Although parts of the fixed prayer need not be recited when not in a community, the Talmud clearly emphasizes the communal setting of reciting prayers.<sup>23</sup> The communal aspect of prayer can be derived from the obligation to have a *minyan* (a quorum of ten people) to recite certain passages and from the emphasis to recite prayer even at the same time as the rest of the community.<sup>24</sup>

The most prominent example of the use of what I call representational language, however, is the employment of Deut 26:5–10. After retelling the story of the four children asking about the Passover story, the Haggadah introduces the story of the Exodus and other ways the ancestors have been oppressed. The biblical passage, which is primarily used during the festival Shavuot, is the primary passage to recall the story of the Exodus. It is not entirely clear as to why the Haggadah makes use of this passage instead of Exod 12.<sup>25</sup> The only evidence we have is that the Talmud gives commands that this passage is to be used.<sup>26</sup> However, in the Haggadah, this passage almost replicates the halakhic commentary of the passage.<sup>27</sup> The narrative of Deut 26 reinforces this language. But here, it becomes especially evident at the very beginning of the verse: “My father/ancestor was a wandering Aramean.”<sup>28</sup> It is *my* father as if Jacob himself was the father of the narrator. The possessive pronoun highlights this representational language as it refers directly to oneself in the present. Reciting Deut 26 reinforces the representational language. When looking throughout the structure of the Haggadah, one can see various points

<sup>22</sup> The passage “My father was a wandering Aramean,” is used both for Passover and for Shavuot. Representational language is not unique to the rabbinic discourse and the Hebrew Bible. Liturgical texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly *The Words of the Luminaries*, suggest that representational language was used as well. Thus, both the sectarian community in Qumran and rabbinic Judaism show a continuity of realizing and actualizing memory of history into the present. See also Travis B. Williams, “From Cognitive Perceptions to Community Traditions. The Formation of Collective Memory,” in *History and Memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Remembering the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 221–41.

<sup>23</sup> See also Berakhot 29a:25–27.

<sup>24</sup> Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly: Tensions Between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 1998), 20–23. See also Joseph Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart. Essays on Jewish Prayer*, ed. Shalom Charmy (Brooklyn, NY: KTAV, 2018), 31. Reuven Hammer emphasizes the communal aspect as well: Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), 15–16.

<sup>25</sup> Joshua Kulp offers an outline of the different hypotheses of why the Haggadah uses Deut 26. Reasons include the familiarity with the passage because it is already used on Shavuot. Other scholars suggest that it is used because Exod 12, which is the actual narrative, was already used by Christians of that time. Others believe that this passage follows the Mishnah to tell the story from disgrace to praise. Kulp suggests, however, that choosing Deut 26 over Exod 12 has to do with their length. Deut 26 is a simple and short reconstruction of the complex and long narrative.

<sup>26</sup> Pesahim 116a:7 which reads: “And he expound from the passage: “An Aramean destroyed my father” ומסיים בשבחה ודורש מארמי אובד אבי.

<sup>27</sup> See Sifrei Devarim 301, 3–24.

<sup>28</sup> אַרְמֵי אֲבִד אָבִי: The Hebrew text is unclear here because of the root אבד. The grammatical use as qal participle. Without going into philological details, it is important as to how *Sifre Devarim* interprets this passage as though an Aramean was enslaving “my father.” This interpretation makes the ancestor be the one who was persecuted by an Aramean. The midrash reads this as a reference to Jacob serving Laban. cf. Sifre Devarim 301.



where representational language is applied. We have already discussed the questions of the four children, where again, the first-person plural and the present tense are key components to understand the question of the fourth and wicked child. The liturgical language, and thus, a distinction between “our ancestors” and “us,” is applied again.<sup>29</sup>

The Haggadah intentionally applies this representational language in Deut 26. At the point where one lifts the Seder plate at the beginning of Maggid, the language clearly distinguishes between the ancestors and the present. Then, it purposefully transports the situation of the ancestors into the present by applying the situation to the present situation of poverty and need: “This is the bread of poverty which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover. At present, we are here; next year may we be in the land of Israel; At present we are slaves; next year we may be free.”<sup>30</sup>

From the perspective of the past, the first-person plural refers to “our ancestors.” From the perspective of the present, the first-person plural is referring to the celebrating community as slaves. In the future perspective (“next year”), the first-person plural refers to the community in freedom.

In sum, we have outlined two passages prominent in the Jewish celebration of the Passover Seder as an example of the significance of memory within Judaism. The passage in Exod 13 contains two aspects that the rabbinic sages elaborate on, and that turns out to be vital for the role of memory in the Passover celebration. One aspect is the role of food in connection to memory. The other is the telling of the story in the first-person plural. First, through food that the participants eat, they remember the history of their ancestors as if it was their history. The significance of the senses can be applied to the Passover Seder as it uses food not only as a symbol but as a sensory experience of Israel's last days in Egypt. By eating *matzah* and bitter herbs (*marror*), the experience becomes distinct. They transform that very memory into an experienced experience. Thus, Egypt did not only happen at the time of Moses, but the participants in the Passover Seder remember it as their own story with their senses; they experience the Exodus. With an emphasis on the participatory aspect of memory, O'Donnell rightly points out that “[t]hrough participation in the Seder and the recitation of the Haggadah, the person ‘remembers’ the exodus in a ritual act that transcends the basic recollection of past events.”<sup>31</sup> According to these findings, senses are crucial for an experience that is distinct from any other and shape it as unique.

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<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Kulp, *The Schechter Haggadah*, 30–33. Another element in the Haggadah worth noting when it comes to representational language is the song called *Dayenu*. It also uses representational language in a similar purposeful way: It starts with God who “brought us out of Egypt”, and then retelling the story of many generations through the wilderness. There is a variety of different versions of the song *Dayenu*. Some of the versions only apply the biblical narrative, while other versions continue the *Dayenu* until matters of today. One example is provided in Noam Zion and David Dishon, *A Different Night. The Family Participation Haggadah* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 1997), 109. The version I refer to here in the Schechter Haggadah continues with the modern contexts such as the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights or the establishment of the State of Israel. Kulp, *The Schechter Haggadah*, 50.

<sup>30</sup> Kulp, *The Schechter Haggadah*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> O'Donnell, *Remembering the Future*, 96.

Secondly, the retelling of the story serves as another vehicle to create a distinct experience. It is through the “four children” that the distinctive use of the first-person plural (“we”) becomes distinctive from the second plural (“you”). Also, the communal sense of the present versus the past becomes essential, as one can see in the Haggadah’s use of Deut 26:5–12, where “our ancestor” becomes distinct from “us” in the present. This story of the wandering Aramean creates a clear distinction between Israel’s forefathers on the one hand and Israel in the present, which is in Egypt, on the other.

### **The Text In-Between: *The Words of the Luminaries***

The context of the Passover Seder shows the significance of memory within the particular ritual but also illuminates the general role of memory within a religious tradition. Memory serves as a means to create identity in the Passover Seder. However, this following section will show that this use of memory can go beyond the particularity of the Seder ritual. In fact, we can see a similar use of memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection of scrolls from a community in Qumran. At this point, liturgical prayers of the Dead Sea Scrolls can be helpful to not only trace back the continuities and differences between Christianity and Judaism, as they are often seen as texts “in-between” Second Temple Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, and Christianity. Also, these prayers widen the scope of this inquiry not just textually but also for the liturgical theological context. It shows that the identity-shaping core of memory in the Passover Seder can be applied to an understanding of the practice of prayer in general. For our purposes, *The Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504) is an excellent example of ways to re-present memory because we find similar motifs in these texts.

*The Words of the Luminaries* (*Divrei ha-me’orot*) are a set of daily prayers and the Shabbat found in three different scrolls in the caves of Qumran (scrolls 4Q503, 4Q504, 4Q505). The six week-day prayers all seem to have functioned as communal prayers and supplications that remember historical events.<sup>32</sup> The structure of the whole scroll aligns with the weekdays, starting with Sunday (cols. 1–3) and then ending with Shabbat (cols. 18–20).<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, each prayer starts with the formula of supplication “Remember, oh [our] Lord.”<sup>34</sup> Throughout these six days, the prayers reflect on God’s deeds throughout history, starting from Genesis through the Babylonian Exile.<sup>35</sup> Within these prayers, we encounter both the communal aspects and representation.

Esther Chazon pointed toward the communal language of *The Words of the Luminaries* and pointed out the almost exclusive use of the first-person plural in prayer. For instance, the prayer for Wednesday starts as follows:

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<sup>32</sup> Esther G. Chazon, “Words of the Luminaries,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>33</sup> For delivery of a comprehensive structure of 4Q504, see David K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 64.

<sup>34</sup> 4Q504 3:6: זכור אדוני for instance.

<sup>35</sup> Esther G. Chazon, “Prayer and Identity in Varying Contexts: The Case of the Words of the Luminaries,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 46 (2015), 488–89.

Prayer on the fourth day. Remember, O Lord [...] your [...] shall be consecrated in glory [...] an eye for an eye, You have appeared among us [...] Your holy words we have heard [...] upon us so that we do not [...] Your great and holy name [...] the earth [...] [...] and so that we trust [...] forever. And You made a covenant with us in Horeb concerning all these statutes and judgments [...] and the good [...] and the holy and [...] which through Moses and [...] in all [...] face to face You spoke to him [...] glory [...] You accepted him.<sup>36</sup>

Through this language, the praying person identifies with the events that are recalled within these prayers.<sup>37</sup> Though some scholars identify the numerous references of God's deeds and events in the past among the Dead Sea Scrolls, they fail to recognize this particular use of what we call re-presentational language. Among them, George Brooke outlines the historical aspects of the prayers. However, he remains focused on a historical view of the prayers and does not mention how this language shapes the people's identity.<sup>38</sup> The use of the first person within the Passover Seder allows the reader to be part of the exodus community as if he or she had experienced the journey from Egypt to Mt. Sinai him- or herself. It is not said, "you made a covenant with our ancestors." Instead, it is said, "You made a covenant with *us* in Horeb."<sup>39</sup>

The first-person plural is not limited to *The Words of the Luminaries*, but is observed in various scrolls. For instance, in a rather cognitive approach, Travis Williams observes how memory is transformed in the *Damascus Rule*, in particular at the topic of the teacher of righteousness, a figure who knows the Torah and the commandments. The *Damascus Rule* frequently references this teacher of righteousness (CD 1:11), asking to remember the teacher's teachings, especially during a special "assembly" of all communities outside the Qumran community (CD 3:8; 20:30). Williams argues that "[w]hen collaborative remembering occurs, the collective memory of the group progressively takes shape, and if the process continues, tradition will eventually emerge. Through the formative processes of collaboration, the personal memories of individuals become the collective memory of the group."<sup>40</sup> Williams asserts that individual memory becomes collective memory that transforms the identity of the individual through the memory of a specific and assumingly historical figure. Remembering this figure creates a collective memory. This idea, however, can leave us with the assumption that the individual identity vanishes into the memory of the group. However, one may ask whether it is possible that the group identity also shapes the individual identity without completely absorbing it.<sup>41</sup> William's

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<sup>36</sup> 4Q504 f3ii:2-18 a. This passage, like some other parts of the Words of the Luminaries, is corrupted in the original Hebrew scroll, which leaves us with sometimes only partial sentences. While some parts became illegible, this Wednesday prayer seems to be a praise of God's name and a memory of God's deeds when the Israelites were in the wilderness after their redemption from Egypt. I cite here what scholars identified as the meaning of the words.

<sup>37</sup> Chazon, "Prayer and Identity," 488.

<sup>38</sup> George J. Brooke, "Praying History in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Memory, Identity, Fulfillment," in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*, ed. Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 313.

<sup>39</sup> Compare with Chazon's argument, Chazon, "Prayer and Identity," 493.

<sup>40</sup> Travis B. Williams, "From Cognitive Perceptions to Community Traditions. The Formation of Collective Memory," in *History and Memory in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Remembering the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 236.

<sup>41</sup> This question deserves further research. Assuming that individuals in the community submerge their identity for a community identity is essential. However, one may ask if there is evidence within the Dead Sea Scrolls that show the preserving of the individual identity within the community.

observations can be applied to the observations made on *The Words of the Luminaries* as also in the daily prayers, a specific and historical event is remembered collectively, but through the prayers of the individual.

The other motif that one can extract from the Wednesday prayer requires is the experience of wilderness. Like the food that is used in the Passover as a way to experience the exodus in Egypt and the time in Egypt, the wilderness becomes a symbol of experiencing God's deeds. To clarify, it is not only the prominence of the wilderness motif that makes us come to this conclusion.<sup>42</sup> It is the way the wilderness is described here. The individual who prays the prayer saying, “You have revealed to us. . .” (4Q504 f3ii:5) acknowledges that the divine word and guidance were revealed in the wilderness. Wilderness becomes a way to experience God, which parallels the life of the community that prays the prayer and that lives in the wilderness. Alison Schofield argues that the community praying these prayers in Qumran may have incorporated this aspect of the wilderness of God being present and revealing God's word by moving into the wilderness. She further states that “it is possible. . . that the Qumranites interpreted their stay in the wilderness as important. . . to study and live out the law, but also to receive similar revelation.”<sup>43</sup> Here, Schofield highlights the importance for the community to reveal a similar revelation to the revelation on Mt. Sinai from God. However, one can also look at this fact from the mere experiential experience that the community re-experiences the wilderness of the Israelites on their way to the future that was promised to them—that is, life in the land God promised them. This re-experiencing, then, can be further connected with the observation of the use of the first-person plural: By experiencing the wilderness, the praying person becomes part of the wilderness experienced by the Israelites.

In sum, *The Words of the Luminaries* further emphasize a representational language and a way of experiencing the memory of the Israelites being in the wilderness themselves. Thus, both the sectarian community in Qumran and rabbinic Judaism show a continuity of realizing and actualizing memory of history into the present. It is, as Williams points out, a way of shaping communal identity.<sup>44</sup> Symbols and reenactment, then, help to make the memory a more tangible experience. Or, put differently, the reenactment makes the memory become lived experience that shapes one's personal identity. But these observations make one wonder how this tradition has not survived in our Christian context.

### **Theological Considerations**

Based on the previous discussion, two functions of memory can be highlighted for a deeper understanding of memory in the Christian tradition. First, the discussion shows that remembering was a way to make the past become present during the Passover Seder. The use of the first-person plural enabled the participant in the Seder or the person praying the prayer to personally identify with the past individually. Moreover, the language creates a communal

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<sup>42</sup> Chazon, “Prayer and Identity,” 490.

<sup>43</sup> Alison Schofield, “The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Israel in the Wilderness. Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, by Kenneth E. Pomykala (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 48.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, “From Cognitive Perceptions to Community Traditions. The Formation of Collective Memory,” 238.

identity. Assuming a communal setting of the prayers and the Seder, the language encourages the establishment of communal identity. For the participants of the Seder, the exodus from Egypt becomes their personal identity. Second, the examination of the passages in conversation with Luther Martin's psychological approach to ritual shows that what was remembered becomes present not only through representational language but also through symbolism and our senses. Through symbolic acts, the past becomes a reality for the participants. In the Seder, Matzah and bitter herbs serve as sensual and tangible objects; the Exodus is being realized as God commanded the first generation of the Exodus. Together, these two functions of memory on a Christian understanding anamnesis, specifically when applied to the words of institution. The Christian emphasis on anamnesis as the remembering of Christ's death and resurrection, and as the "re-presenting" of Christ into our midst, as seen in the liturgy that has been highlighted by many scholars in liturgy but also in Metz's work, can be enhanced by shifting the emphasis toward the participants' act of remembering as an act of becoming present in the Last Supper. One may think of the celebration of the Eucharist as an act of realizing the Last Supper event through the symbolic breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup, like when, in the Seder, the participants are remembering the Exodus as if they themselves had participated in it

Furthermore, the discussion on *The Words of the Luminaries* widens the scope of our inquiry, away from the use of memory in one particular setting during Passover toward a broader liturgical understanding of memory. Both representational language and sensory experience can be found in the daily prayers of the community in Qumran. But how can this understanding of memory be applied more broadly to our Christian identity? I would like to conclude here with two thoughts for further elaborations. The first thought seeks to broaden the discussion on a liturgical level. Above, I have sought to show how the particular use of memory in the Passover Seder can inform one aspect of our Christian idea of memory in the case of the Eucharist. A closer look at the daily prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, reveals that the use of the first-person plural and the realizing aspects of memory was used daily by the Jewish sectarians at the time of Jesus' ministry. To be clear, we do not know much about how exactly the Passover was celebrated beyond the sacrificial cult at the time of Jesus. Also, the text of the Seder is a composition of texts that are centuries younger than *The Words of the Luminaries*. However, the similarities of the use of memory are striking, and they tempt us to think about how to remember the past. Not only do these findings show us that the scholarly discussion around memory is complex and has focused too much on the notion of Jesus's memory as specific to the Passover Seder, but they also invite us to broaden our view to think about the role of memory in a wider liturgical-theological context, such as prayer in general. To clarify, the realizing language combined with the sensorial experience of a prayerful life in the wilderness, combined with the findings in the Passover, seem to offer new avenues into our liturgical remembering of the past beyond the Last Supper toward prayer in general. What role does memory play in our attempt to pray to God? How do memory and presence relate to another in our prayer? Memory serves a role as part of Christian prayer and identity. It is the memory that shapes our identity. Moreover, in prayers, we often remember God's deeds before uplifting our petitions. If we understand remembering God's deeds in prayer as realization, one needs to investigate how it is realized in prayer and other liturgical actions.



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